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HISTORY OF SANTA CATALINA ISLAND

BY MRS. M. BURTON WILLIAMSON.

(Read Dec. 7, 1903.)

Santa Catalina is one of an interesting group of islands lying south of Point Concepcion, along the coast of Southern California. These are often divided into two groups, the more northern ones, known as the Channel Islands, being composed of San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz and Anacapa, along the coast of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Santa Catalina, Santa Barbara, San Nicolas and San Clemente are the group of Santa Barbara Islands that lie along the coast of Los Angeles and San Diego Counties.

Although belonging to Los Angeles County, some twenty miles or more must be sailed over before Santa Catalina is reached.

The length of Santa Catalina is variously estimated at from 18 to 22 miles. The greatest width is estimated at eight miles, the narrowest being at the isthmus, which is only one-half mile across.

The island is mountainous and covered with jutting peaks that rise on every side. There are no beaches excepting in the crescent-shaped cañons, for bold rocks stand out in the water, in some places like immense granite walls, against which the ocean dashes in its fury. Even at the isthmus the curving beaches are limited to small areas.

Prof. Lawson,* the geologist, says the "larger part" of the island is "composed of volcanic rocks, not essentially different in their general field character from those of San Clemente." The greatest elevations on the island are known as Orizaba and Black Jack, which rise near the center of the island to a height of over 2000 feet.

"There are half a dozen or more springs and creeks which do not dry up during the summer, and a few wells supply the other points. All the water is decidedly alkaline."*

* "The Past Pliocene Diastrophism of the Coast of Southern California," by Andrew C. Lawson, University of Cal. "Bull. Dept. Geol., Vol. 1, No. 4.)

A casual visitor on Santa Catalina Island in the summer time will tell you that, aside from trees and plants under cultivation, the island is devoid of vegetation, save a few scrubby trees, the prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia*) running in riotous growth over the hills, and the long yellow grass that covers the otherwise bare earth.

But the botanist tells another tale of rare trees and shrubs not reported elsewhere. And besides these he finds plants that lie hidden in the cañons, needing the winter rains to encourage their unfolding. Many years ago a friend of mine, who was something of a botanist, was enthusiastic over the wealth of wild flowers that followed in the train of the winter showers and grew in beauty on the hills and in the vale of Avalon. Our so-called Mariposa Lily, which is a tulip, was first reported from the island, and bears the name of "*Calochortus Catalinae*," Wats, or "*Catalina Mariposa Tulip*." This is only one of a number of plants new to science found on this island.

To one who loves to indulge in the play of fancy amid primitive surroundings, there is no spot more ideal than one of the lonely foothills overlooking the ocean in this island. Encompassed by a wild and tangled growth that climbs the perpendicular mountains, with dry grass under one's feet, the blue Pacific splashing and dashing against the upright rocks below, one can sit and forget he is a part of the rushing procession of the world. The petty cares of yesterday with the multitude have gone; they have fallen off like a mantle that is too heavy when the sun has risen. Surrounded by the Eternal, your soul is at peace.

This is the Isle of Summer as it has arisen from the hand of nature, but man—restless, struggling man—has invaded the island and a new environment is replacing the primitive one. The calculating engineer, the landscape gardener and architect, with all their concomitant following, are dotting the cañons, and the slippery trail of the wild goat gives place to the upland stage drawn by many horses. The fame of the nervy jew fish and albacore has given the island an international reputation, and the unrest of the summer visitor is fast converting the land of sweet idleness into a fashionable watering place.

Many years ago when I visited the little crescent-shaped vale of Avalon, it was only a diminutive, quiet tent town, nestled between towering peaks. In other cañons a little soli-

* "*The Geology of Santa Catalina Island*," by William Tangier Smith. (Proc. Cal. Acad. Sciences.)

tary shack of a home, and at the isthmus the deserted barracks of the U. S. government, used during the Civil war, was standing in solitary abandonment.

On my last visit in 1902 the automobile rushed along the shaded avenues of transplanted trees to the golf grounds, and up the steep hills the wireless telegraph had caught a sound-proof resting place. A teeming crowd of restless humanity surged up and down the beach in front of Avalon, with her numerous hotels and stores, and her cottages dotted the hill sides, only reached by steep flights of steps.

Instead of a two-masted yacht landing her dozen passengers, two, and oftener three, steamships daily filled from the upper to the lower deck with a crowd of passengers, puffed up to the pier with the haste of a time limit.

Even the shore has felt the change. Dredging, so as to enable boats of deeper caliber to land, has changed this gently receding beach to one of more abrupt declension. The dead shells no longer are stranded upon the beach; they lie amid the sands, rarely uncovered by the tide. The white valves of the Chione and the rare pink-lined ones of the Hemicardium and the pure white pebbles no longer strew the beach.

Bath houses, rustic seats and fishing stands, hung with fish whose single weight runs up into the hundreds of pounds, encircle the water front almost to Sugar Loaf rock.

Where, years ago, tiny golden fish played in and out under the skiff as we rowed over the water, on my last visit to Avalon an expert diver went down into the water to seek for missing diamonds dropped overboard by a hotel visitor as she returned on a vessel from a pleasure trip to the isthmus.

But, while diamonds and dollars pervade the 'Avalon of other days, and have sought a landing place at the isthmus—which, no doubt, will be joined by the rushing trolley car—yet the hills, with their rugged sides, cannot be irrigated in a day, and so will long jut out alluring peaks to tempt the lover of Nature to seek the solitude of uncultivated slopes.

We are glad the scientists' iron-clad rule of precedence in nomenclature does not obtain in the naming of the island, else the more euphonius name of Santa Catalina would give place to that of "Victoria," named by Cabrillo, the earlier navigator. For Vizcaino (variously spelled Viscaino, Vizcaino and Viscayno) sighted this pile of mountains in the sea at a later date than Cabrillo, but he remembered it was Saint Catherine's day and he gave her the island as a namesake. But Victoria would

have been far more preferable than "Pimugna" (also printed Pineugna), the Indian name for this island.

Viscaino journeyed from San Diego when he sighted the island, and Hittell says:

"Here he found many Indians—men, women and children—all clothed in seal skins, and was received by them with extreme kindness. They were a fine-looking race, had large dwellings and numerous rancherias; made admirable canoes, some of which would carry twenty persons; and were expert seal hunters and fishermen. There were many things of interest there, but the most extraordinary were a temple and idol, the most remarkable of which any account remains among the Californians. The temple consisted of a large circular place ornamented with variously colored feathers of different kinds. Within the circle was the idol, a figure supposed to represent the devil*, painted in the manner in which the Indians of New Spain were accustomed to depict their demon, and having at his sides representatives of the sun and moon. To this idol it was said the Indians sacrificed large numbers of birds, and that it was with their feathers that the place was adorned. When the Spanish soldiers, who were conducted thither by an Indian, arrived at the spot, they found within the circle two extraordinary crows†, much larger than common, which, upon their approach, flew away and perched upon the neighboring rocks. Struck by their size, the soldiers shot and killed them both; whereupon their Indian guide began to utter the most pathetic lamentations. 'I believe,' says Father Torquemanda, 'that the devil was in those crows and spoke through them, for they were regarded with great respect and veneration;' and in further illustration of this he relates that on another occasion, when several Indian women were washing fish upon the beach, the crows approached and snatched the food from their hands; and that the women stood in such awe that they dared not drive them away, and were horrified when the Spaniards threw stones at them."**

To quote further, Mr. Hittell says: "Among the **natural** productions of Santa Catalina were large quantities of edible roots, called "gicamas," and in these, according to Viscaino, the Indians carried on a sort of trade with their neighbors of the mainland."†

* See Hugo Reid's account in this paper.

† See also Bancroft's Native Races, Vol. III.

**Hittell's History of California, Vol. I.

† Torquemanda L. V., Chap. LII, quoted in Hittell's Hist. California, Vol. I.

He also mentions as another significant fact that the women of the island had pleasant countenances, fine eyes, and were modest and decorous in their behavior*, and that the children were white and ruddy and all very affable and agreeable. From these statements, as well as from those made by Cabrillo in reference to the Indians of the opposite coast, it is evident that the natives of these regions†, on account of a difference either in blood or in the circumstances under which they lived, were far in advance of the other natives of California."

Bancroft‡ mentions some of the uses that shells were put to; that "The beard is plucked out with a bi-valve shell which answers the purpose of pinchers," and also that "The more industrious and wealthy embroider their garments profusely with small shells."*

In Farnham's quaint volume on the "Early Days of California," he says of Viscaino's voyage to the island, which he calls Santa Catarina: "The inhabitants of Santa Catarina make the most noisy and earnest invitations for them to land. The General (Viscaino) therefore orders Admiral Gomez, Captain Peguero and Ensign Alarcon, with twenty-four soldiers, to land on the island and learn what the natives so earnestly desire. As soon as they reach the shore they are surrounded by Indian men and women, who treat them with much kindness and propriety, and intimate that they have seen other Spaniards. When asked for water, they give it to the whites in a sort of bottle made of rushes

"They explore the island. It appears to be overgrown with savin and a species of briar. A tent is pitched for religious service, and Padre Tomas (de Aquino), being ill, Padres Antonio (de la Ascencion) and Andrez (de la Assumpcion) celebrate mass in presence of all the people. These Indians spend much of their time in taking the many varieties of fish which abound in the bay."

Besides having plenty of fish, the natives were supplied with quail, partridges, rabbits, hare and deer.

At that time, according to this writer, the people of the neighboring islands were in direct communication with the natives of this island.

* Torquemanda L. V., Chap. LIII, translated in Hittell's Hist. Cal., Vol. I.

† "Other islands of Santa Barbara Channel."

‡ Bancroft's Native Races, Vol. I.

* Bancroft's Native Races, Vol. I.

From the landing of Viscaino to the time of the Missionary Fathers, history furnishes us with little data regarding the people of this island. A writer in Bancroft's *Native Races* says: "When first discovered by Cabrillo, in 1542, the islands off the coast were inhabited by a superior people, but these they were induced by the padres to abandon, following which event the people faded away."*

The Very Reverend Joseph J. O'Keefe, Superior of the Franciscans, in a letter on this subject says: "The lapse of time, from the exploration of Cabrillo to the coming of the Missionary Fathers to this part of the coast, was somewhat over two centuries, during which long period many and radical changes could have easily taken place, and must have taken place, if Cabrillo found, as Bancroft states, a superior people on the islands. The fact that there is no record by the Fathers of their having found any such people on the islands, after their arrival here in 1768-9, goes far to prove that if such people existed at the time of Cabrillo's explorations in 1542, they had even before the advent of the Fathers (1769) either left the islands and become mixed up with the Chumas and other tribes on the mainland, or were exterminated by disease or war."

William Henry Holmes, the well known anthropologist of the U. S. National Museum, is of the opinion that the natives of this island did "not differ essentially, in blood or culture, from the people of the mainland."*

The question has often been asked, "Why didn't the Fathers establish a mission on Santa Catalina Island?" In his biennial report of the missions in 1803-4 it appears that President Estevan Tapis did favor the founding of a mission on the isle which he calls "Limu." In his report he says: "Limu abounds with timber, water and soil. There are ten rancherias on the island, the three largest of which, Cajatsa, Ashuael and Liam, have 124, 145 and 122 adults respectively. The men are naked, live on fish, and are eager for a mission."* He also reports that the natives of Santa Rosa were willing to move to Santa Cataline, or Limu, as they had "no facilities for a mission." But in his later report of 1805-6, according to Bancroft, "the president confessed that as the sarampion, or measles, had carried off over two hundred natives on the two islands, and as a recent

* Bancroft's *Native Races*, Vol. I.

* *Anthropological Studies in California*, by William Henry Holmes. (Report U. S. Nat. Mus. 1900.)

* Bancroft's *History of California*, Vol. II.

investigation had shown a lack of good lands and of water, the expediency of founding a mission was doubtful."

Captain Wm. Shaler, of the *Lelia Byrd*, who landed at Santa Catalina in 1805, reported that he found about one hundred and fifty Indians on the island, and they were very friendly to him—"he believed himself the first explorer"[†] of the harbor where he anchored, and he named it after his former partner, Port Rouissillon.[‡] He stayed at the island about six weeks, and afterward published a narrative of his voyages.

In 1807 Jonathan Winship of the vessel *O'Cain* "hunted otter for a time at Santa Catalina Island, where he found forty or fifty Indian residents who had grain and vegetables to sell."*

The reports of these two Captains, one of 150 Indians in 1805, and the other, two years later, of 50 Indians, would indicate that the measles, or some other cause, had greatly reduced the number that in 1803-4 had been reported by the president of the missions as almost 400.

The Rev. Father O'Keefe gives us the reasons why no mission was founded upon the island. He writes:[†] "I always understood that there were not many Indians on Santa Catalina Island at the time of the missions; also that the government was opposed to and would not aid in founding any missions, except on the mainland. So this is the true reason why no mission was established on the island, apart from the fact that the Indians were but few at the time. As missions could not be established on the islands, lacking government consent, I know the Fathers invited the few Indians of the islands to join the missions on the coast, so they might more conveniently instruct them in Christian doctrine; as the Fathers were not many, and those appointed to the newly established missions could not be absent from them for many days, they could go but seldom to the islands, and then with great hardship and inconvenience.

There is a legend that the male natives of Santa Catalina were killed by the Aleuts, or Kodiak Indians, of Russian America, but I have not been able to verify this statement. In Robinson's *Life in California*, in referring to the importance of the

[†] "Captain Shaler's narrative, published in 1808, was the first extended account of California printed in the United States."—Bancroft's *History of California*, Vol. II.

[‡] Count Rouissillon, a distinguished Pole.

* Bancroft's *History of California*, Vol. II.

[†] In a letter.

* Bancroft's *History of California*, Vol. II.

trade in fur seals and sea otters, which had "called the attention of the Russian Codiaks" to the islands, he says: "On one occasion, in a quarrel with the islanders at St. Nicholas (San Nicolas), they inhumanly massacred nearly the whole of the male inhabitants, which act naturally induced the entire population of these islands (Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and San Nicolas) to seek refuge and protection among the several missionary establishments on the mainland."

As Mr. Robinson was familiar with Santa Catalina, where as super-cargo's clerk his vessel often weighed anchor, if the islanders had met a similar fate, he certainly would have mentioned it.

In the autumn of 1838, according to Bancroft,* Captain John Bancroft of the ship *Llama* landed at Santa Rosa Island with "twenty-five fierce Kaiganies." Later he went to Santa Catalina Island to hunt otter, and on November 21, after a quarrel with one of these northwestern Indians, he was shot in back and mortally wounded. His wife, who was on board the vessel, threw herself upon his body and was also wounded. Mrs. Bancroft died about two months afterward, "from the effects of her wounds."

Father Geronimo Boscano* interviewed some of the natives to ascertain their original conceptions, and his MSS., translated after his death, give us some insight into the religious beliefs of the Indians of Alta California. Boscano writes: "It is difficult, I confess, if unacquainted with their language, to penetrate their secrets." To their god, Chinigchinick, they attribute this command: "And to those who have kept my commandments I shall give all they ask of me; but those who obey not my teachings, nor believe them, I shall punish severely. I will send unto them bears to bite, and serpents to sting them; they shall be without food and have diseases that they may die." They evidently feared punishment only in this world.

* Chinigchinick: A Historical Account of the Indians of Alta California, by the Rev. Father Friar Geronimo Boscano. Translated from the original MS. by one who was many years a resident of Alta California (1844). This translation by Alfred Robinson was bound with his *Life in California* by an American (Alfred Robinson).

Hugo Reid, or Prefecto Hugo Reid, a Scotchman, who came to California in 1834 or '35 and settled near the San

* See Hist. of Cal. by Hubert Howe Bancroft, Vol. IV, pages 90-119.

Gabriel Mission, has given us a series of articles on the Indians of Los Angeles County. These letters were written for the Los Angeles Star in 1852.* Hugo Reid had married an Indian woman and lived much among the natives. He is reputed to have been a man of education. Although referring mostly to the Indians of the mainland, reference is occasionally made to those upon the islands. Reid makes no mention of the islanders as being unlike those of the rest of Los Angeles County. Had they been so at the time he knew them, he certainly would have noted their differences.

Mrs. Laura Evertsen King, who knew the Indian wife of Hugo Reid, speaks of her as a refined woman of affectionate disposition. She was very proud of her Scotch husband. They had two children, from whom presents were often received from Scotland. Of Mr. Reid, she says he had been a great traveler, had a large library, for that time. Among his effects was a letter of Byron's written to his publisher. While living in San Gabriel, Reid often was gone three months at a time. Mrs. King speaks of him as being a reticent man. Both his son and his daughter died before reaching 20 years of age. The Indian wife died of smallpox in 1864.

In Davis' *Sixty Years in California*," he also says of Reid's wife: "We were surprised and delighted with the excellence and neatness of the housekeeping of the Indian wife, which could not have been excelled. The beds which were furnished us to sleep on were exquisitely neat, with coverlids of satin, the sheets and pillow cases trimmed with lace and highly ornamented."

Reid says: "Fish, seals, whales, sea otter and shell fish formed the principal subsistence of the immediate coast range of lodges and islands."

Acorns were dried, pounded and carefully prepared and cooked to form a mush. "Salt was used sparingly, as they considered it having a tendency to turn the hair grey." All of their food was eaten cold, or nearly so. He says that next to the acorn, the favorite "food was the kernel of a species of plum which grows in the mountains and islands, and called by them islay." "Some call it the 'mountain cherry,' although it partakes little of either the plum or cherry."

These mountain cherries (*Prunus illicifolia* Walp.) still grow on Santa Catalina, and Cherry Valley received its name from the presence of these shrubs, or small trees, in the cove. Their

* Hugo Reid died in December, 1852.

pots to cook in were made of soapstone of about an inch in thickness and procured from the Indians of Santa Catalina; the cover used was of the same material.

The natives of Santa Catalina and those of the coast line appear to have exchanged their local productions and to have had much in common. Pottery from the now famous soapstone quarries (see cut of Indian quarry) of the island figured in the "barter and trade" carried on with the Indians of the interior, who brought their "deer skins and seeds" to trade with the aborigines of the coast.

Hugo Reid gives some very interesting accounts of marriage and burial ceremonies, use of medicines, sports, games and legends. The chief instructed some of the male children orally with long stories, which they repeated word for word until they became such adepts at recitation that no oration was too long for them to recite it.

He says of one legend that he has reproduced: "Whenever this legend was to be told, the hearers first bathed themselves, then came to listen."

As much of the data given us by this writer was related to him by the old Indians or was noted by the writer himself, I am tempted to quote still further: "Before the Indians* belonging to the greater part of this county were known to the whites, they comprised, as it were, one great family, under distinct chiefs. They spoke nearly the same language, with the exception of a few words, and were more to be distinguished by a local intonation of the voice than by anything else.

"Being related by blood and marriage, war was never carried on between them. When war was consequently waged against neighboring tribes of no affinity, it was a common cause."

Like Christian nations, they had their family feuds, often passing down from one generation to another, yet their vari-

* In judging Los Angeles County Indians during the period of their degeneration we must bear in mind the influences surrounding them—aside from the Fathers. Alex. Forbes, Esq., writing in 1835, says: "For whatever soldiers are sent to California are the refuse of the Mexican army, and most frequently are deserters, mutineers or men guilty of military crimes." Add to this influence, whisky for the Indians, and the absence of marriage vows toward the Indian women, and degeneration is the natural result.

ances never reached the point of bloodshed, in which they could not be likened to Christian nations.

"Their huts were made of sticks covered in around with flag mats, worked or platted, and each village generally contained from 500 to 1500 huts."

Of language he says: "They have many phrases to which we have no equivalent." He said that after the coming in of the Spaniards, or, as he puts it, "the conquest," their language degenerated until "the present generation barely comprehends a part of what one of the old 'standards' says." "They believed in one God, the maker and creator of all." The term "Giver of Life" was used for ordinary occasions. "The name of God" was never taken in vain, their nearest approach to an oath being a term equivalent to "Bless me!" They had "never heard of devil or hell until the coming of the Spaniards." They "had no bad spirits connected with their creed." They "believed in no resurrection whatever," but believed in the transmigration of souls into the bodies of animals.

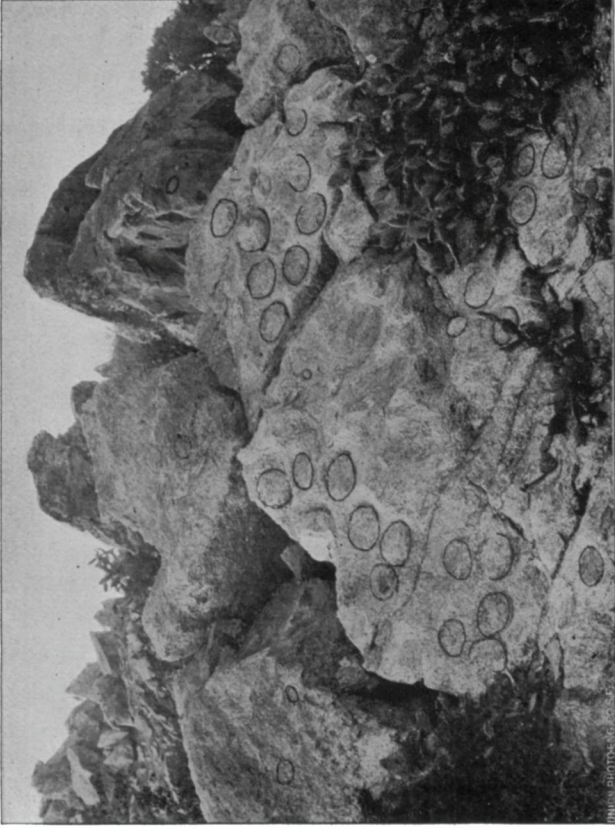
The "chiefs had one, two or three wives, as their inclination dictated. The subjects only one." "The last case of bigamy, or rather polygamy, was one of the chiefs from Santa Catherina (Catalina), who was ordered by the priest to San Gabriel and their baptized. He had three wives, the first one of whom was allowed him, and the others discarded." Reid said this Indian was still living at San Fernando and called "Canoa or Canoe."

Children were taught to be respectful to their elders, "for if an adult asked a boy or girl for a drink of water, they were not allowed to put it to their lips until the other had satisfied his thirst. If two were in a conversation, a child was not permitted to pass between them, but made to go around them on either side. No male from childhood upward was allowed to call his sister 'liar' even in jest, the word for liar being 'yayare.'"

That such refined regard for the amenities of life existed among the aborigines of this coast appears incredible.

Shells have always been prized by aborigines for adornment, and Santa Catalina, as well as the other isles of Southern California, has always been rich in beautiful iridescent abalones (*Haliotis splendens*, *H. Cracherodii*) as well as other forms.

*Note—If Reid is right the Spanish writers were mistaken in supposing the idol was a demon or devil.



INDIAN SOAPSTONE QUARRY
(See Page 25 for Description)

"Although money in the strict sense of the word did not exist among them, they had an equivalent consisting of pieces of thick rounded shells, less than a five-cent piece. These had a hole in the center and were strung on long strings. Eight of these yards of beads (for they were also used as such) made about one dollar of our currency."*

Before passing from the occupation of Santa Catalina by the aborigines, to its usurpation by the white man, some notice must be taken of history written by their own hands as they shaped their implements of bone and stone and carved their "ollas" from the serpentine quarries. These utensils are today the pride of the archæologist as well as the study of the ethnologist. A few years ago anthropologists were enthusiastic over these "finds." It was rumored that "a vast collection of curios" had been removed and sent to the Smithsonian Institute. Through the courtesy of Mr. W. de C. Ravenel, administrative assistant of the U. S. National Museum, I have received a list of Santa Catalina relics now in that museum* A fine list of Indian relics now in the Peabody Museum at Cambridge has very kindly been furnished by Prof. F. W. Putnam, Peabody Professor of American Archæology and Ethnology. Through the kindness of Mr. Frank Wiggins, Secretary Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, I have been able to copy a list of relics found on Santa Catalina Island, and now in the Chamber of Commerce. These lists will be published by the U. S. Cal. Acad. Science.

The soapstone specimens were made from the soapstone* quarries of Empire Landing, or Potts Valley. Mexican Joe says there is one big rock from which as many as 64 pots have been cut. (See cut of Indian quarry.)

Charles Frederick Holder† says of these serpentine ollas: "There was little need for pottery with such vessels. From this stone, which today is made into mantels and tiles, and lines the entrance to the Los Angeles Court House, the ancients formed

* For data regarding the use of shells by Sou. Cal. Islanders, see "Ethno-Conchology: A Study of Primitive Money," by Robert E. C. Stearns. Rep't U. S. Nat. Mus., 1886-87.

* In Mr. Wm. Henry Holmes' Anthropological Studies in California, he mentions a series of relics collected by him when on the island.

* Also known as Catalina marble, or Verde antique.

† An Isle of Summer: Santa Catalina. By Charles Frederick Holder.

dishes, spoons, stone plates, medicine stones, sinkers and a variety of objects.

"The old out-door manufactory is most interesting, and the unfinished ollas can still be seen, with others marked in the rock ready to be cut, when the workmen dropped their tools, never to return."

The remains found upon the island prove that the largest townsite was at the isthmus, where, according to William Henry Holmes, "an important village stood for a long period."*

As early as 1826 or '27 the Mexican governor, Echeandia, appears to have entertained fears of American usurpation. Hittell* says: "The general feeling of distrust against Americans was further exhibited in 1827, in reference to a house erected in 1826 by Captain Cunningham of the American ship Courier, on Santa Catalina Island. It is not unlikely that the maintenance of this establishment, though claimed to be for hunting purposes, may have had something to do with illicit trade.

Captain John Bradshaw of the Franklin was accused "of having touched at Santa Catalina in defiance of special orders," and John Lawlor of the Hawaiian brig Karimoko had been accused of departing from San Pedro without paying duties. It is said: "He had, in spite of repeated warnings, touched at Santa Catalina Island and had even deposited goods there, besides breeding animals, the exportation of which was contraband."*

As the policy of the Mexican government was opposed to foreign traffic on California shores, unless heavy duties were paid, most American ships indulged in contraband trade, and Santa Catalina Island, with its natural harbors, was a very convenient port for such trade. Charles Dwight Willard in his History of Los Angeles City says: "During the years from 1826 to the American occupation, Catalina was a favorite resort for smugglers, and some of the most prominent citizens of Los Angeles were believed to take part in contraband trade."

Santa Catalina also had her period of gold excitement. Professor J. M. Guinn,* our Secretary, has given an interesting

* Anthropological Studies in California, by William Henry Holmes. (Rept. U. S. Nat. Mus.)

* Hittell's History of California, Vol. II.

* Bancroft's History of California, Vol. III.

* An Early Mining Boom on Santa Catalina, by J. M. Guinn. Overland Monthly, Vol. XVI (1890).

history of mining in the island. He says: "The existence of these metals on the Island of Santa Catalina was known long before the acquisition of California by the United States. George Yount, a pioneer of 1830, who, with Pryor, Wolfskill, Laughlin and Prentiss, built a schooner at San Pedro for the purpose of hunting sea otter, found on one of his trips to the island some rich outcroppings. It does not appear, however, that he set much value upon his discovery at the time. He was hunting sea otter, not gold mines. After the discovery of gold at Coloma, and the wild rush of gold hunters to the coast, Yount recalled to mind his find on Santa Catalina. He made three trips to the island in search of his lost lode, but without success. His last trip was in 1854."

Professor Guinn further says: "A tradition of Yount's lost mine was still extant in Los Angeles. This directed attention to Catalina as a prospective mining region."

The first location of a claim was made in "April, 1863, by Martin M. Kimberly" and "Daniel E. Way."

"The first discoveries were made near the isthmus on the northwestern part of the island. The principal claims were in Fourth of July Valley, Cherry Valley and Mineral Hill. Later discoveries were made on the eastern end of the island." According to Professor Guinn there must have been something like a real estate boom on the island: "A site for a city, called 'Queen City,' was located on Wilson Harbor," lots were staked off and numerous claims "were recorded in the Recorder's office of Los Angeles County." "Numerous assays were made, showing the lands to be rich in gold and silver-bearing rock, the assays ranging from \$150 to \$800 per ton." "Stock companies were formed with capital bordering on the millions." But the millions in stock did not materialize in cash for their enterprise, as the busy miners soon found themselves without money to develop their mines. As the writer says: "It was the famine year of Southern California, the terrible dry season of 1863-4. Cattle were dying by thousands, and the cattle barons, whose wealth was in their flocks and herds, saw themselves reduced to the verge of poverty."

Another difficulty arose, and this effectually stopped the progress of mining on this island during the Civil war. As the island had fine harbors for the landing of ships, it was rumored that privateers from the Confederacy were intending to make the island a rendezvous, so the U. S. government built the barracks and stationed troops on Santa Catalina. Orders

were published forbidding any "person or persons, others than owners of stock and corporate companies' employes," to land on the island. This order was issued from the headquarters on Santa Catalina Island, February 5, 1864.

Mrs. S. A. Howland tells me that something like eight or ten thousand dollars' worth of gold was sent to San Francisco, but the one who carried it there failed to report afterward; also that the "Gem of the Ocean" mine in Fourth of July Valley was blasted for ore, with the result that the blast stopped all future expectations, as water, instead of ore, now filled the mine. The "Argentine," another mine in this valley, could only be worked at low tide; at other times the mine was completely out of sight.

Before this time the island had become well known as a fine grazing island for sheep. Men settled on it to look after their sheep interests and little homes or shacks were built in some of the coves. In some cases men had their wives with them, and the settlers on the island began the era of "squatter supremacy." Trees and vines were planted, wells dug, and each settler raised his vegetables, tended his herds of sheep, and only made trips to the mainland for necessities he could not raise.

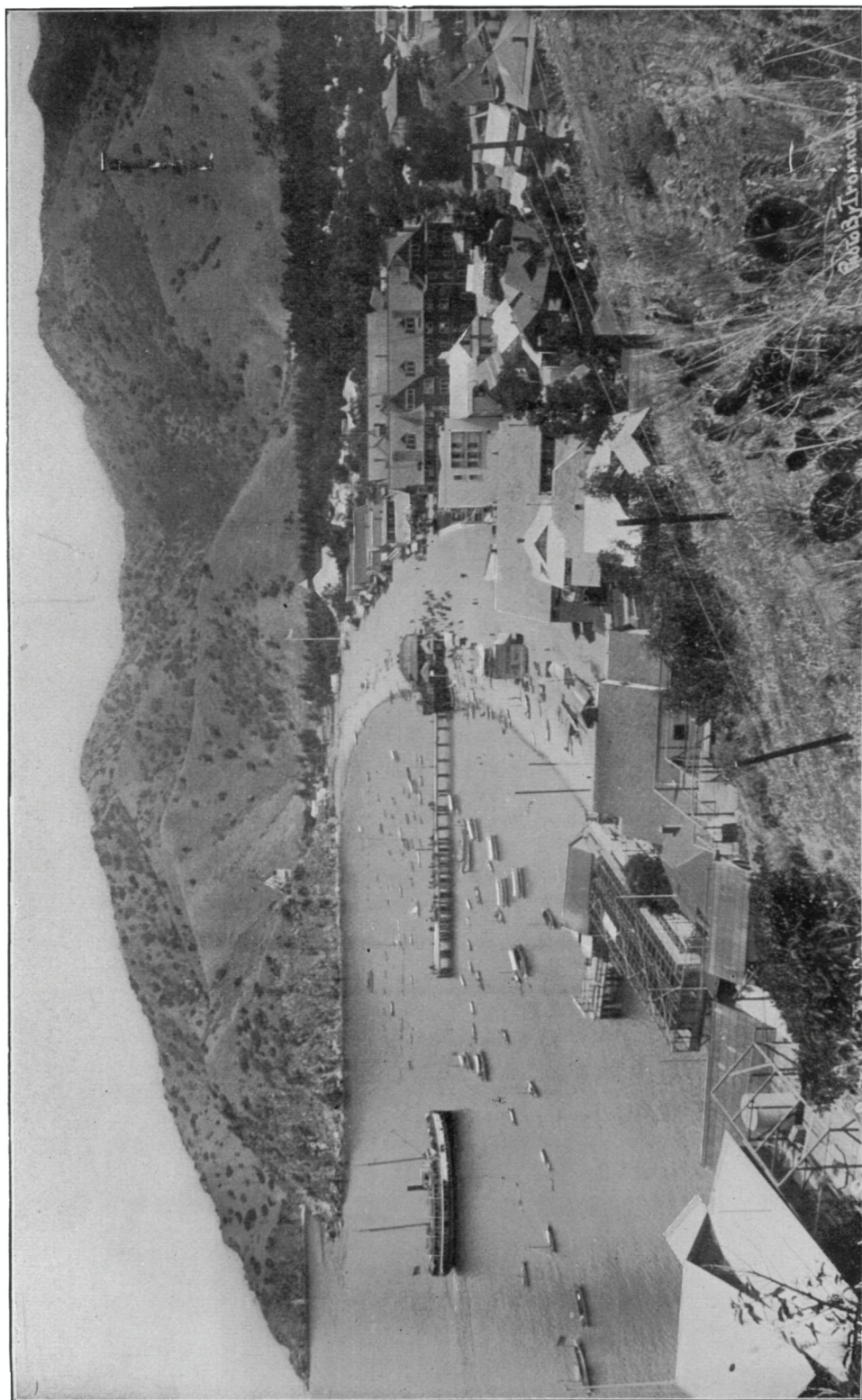
I am indebted to Mrs. S. A. Howland, widow of Captain Howland, for the following data relative to those days:

The cove now called Johnson's Landing was settled by John Benn, a German, and his wife. He built the present house, but this was not the first one he lived in at that place. The cove was known as John Benn's Place. His wife was Spanish.

About ten years after John Benn settled in the cove, Captain and Mrs. Howland bought a squatter's right to the valley now known as Howland Valley. They bought the right of Mr. Harvey Rhoads.

Samuel Prentiss, or Prentice, a native of Rhode Island, and known as "Old Sam," was one of the settlers. He died on the island about the year 1865, and was buried at Howland's Valley. A small picket fence surrounds his grave.*

*Samuel Prentiss was a sailor said to have deserted from an American man-of-war, in South America. He was subsequently one of the crew of the brig Danube, December 25, 1828. Stephen Foster writes "Prentiss," Prentice. Mrs. Howland tells me that this hunter and trapper was an unlettered man but full of information gathered in his roving and outdoor life.



AVALON (See Page 30)

Avalon Valley was settled by two bachelor brothers, Germans, named Johnson—not related to the Johnson who gave his name to Johnson's Landing. There were about five families on the island when Mr. Howland lived there.

The first American child born on the island was William Percival Howland, on April 8, 1866. He was the second son of Captain and Mrs. Howland. He grew up to manhood, but died ten years ago.

Sheep shearing and election days were events on the island. Election was held at the cove of the Johnson brothers, now known as Avalon, and the big fig tree on F street was planted by Mrs. Howland to commemorate the re-election of Abraham Lincoln. The election was in November, 1864, but the tree planting was deferred until February, 1865.

Captain and Mrs. Howland lived on the island for over thirteen years. After some litigation the settlers learned that the U. S. Government had never owned the island, it having passed from the Mexican Government, through Pio Pico to Don Jose Covarrubias.* After James Lick acquired the island the "settlers" left it.

As the statement is frequently made that Santa Catalina at one time belonged to the United States Government and "was sold by the government to James Lick," the following reliable data received from Mr. S. J. Mathes, of Avalon, may set this vexed question of ownership at rest.

"The Island of Santa Catalina never belonged to the U. S. Government. It was given as a grant by the Mexican Government along in the forties, to Don Jose Covarrubias, of Santa Barbara (father of Nick Covarrubias, of Los Angeles). He sold it to a lawyer of Santa Barbara named Packard. After this there were quite a number of transfers, perhaps a dozen persons being interested in the island before James Lick acquired it. Lick owned it about twenty-five years.

"George R. Shatto bought it in 1887, owned it about a year or a little more, when he sold it to an English syndicate. They were to pay \$400,000. They actually paid \$40,000 and defaulted in their payments. The sale fell through because the mines did not prove to be as valuable as they thought them. They supposed from the specimens shown them that they had a veritable bonanza.

"The Bannings* acquired the island in 1891. I do not know just what they paid. Shatto paid \$150,000.

*The Banning brothers of the Wilmington Transportation Company.

"Shatto held an auction sale of lots while he owned the island and disposed of about 200 lots. The Bannings have reduced this by purchase to about eighty lots, which are in other hands."

I am indebted to Mrs. E. J. Whitney of Avalon, Santa Catalina Island, for valuable information regarding the early days of Avalon. She says:

"George R. Shatto of Los Angeles purchased the island from the Lick estate of San Francisco in July, 1887, and immediately began to lay out the town site and prepare for the building of a hotel, the first load of lumber for it coming over the first week in August." This town was called "Shatto" in the first maps which were printed, but Mr. Shatto did not accept the name and the map was not recorded. How did the town come to be called Avalon? In a letter from Mrs. Whitney, who is a relative of the Shattos by marriage, she writes: "Mr. and Mrs. Shatto and myself were looking for a name for the new town, which in its significance should be appropriate to the place, and the names which I was looking up were 'Avon' and 'Avondale,' and I found the name 'Avalon,' the meaning of which, as given in Webster's unabridged, was 'Bright gem of the ocean,' or 'Beautiful isle of the blest.'" Mrs. Whitney was certainly very happy in her choice of names, as none could be more appropriate. The site of the town had only been used as a camping ground and called "Timm's Landing." I quote farther from Mrs. Whitney's letter: "The first meeting of the Board of Trustees of 'Catalina School District' was held July 4, 1891. They were Mrs. S. A. Wheeler, Mr. Frank P. Whittley and Mr. E. J. Whitney. The first teacher was Mrs. M. P. Morris, wife of the pastor of the church. The first church was 'The Congregational Church of Avalon,' organized July 15, 1889. The first pastor was Rev. Chas. Uzzell. A Catholic church was built almost two years ago."

The first child born in the town of Avalon was Douglass McDonell, about eleven years ago.

Among the first permanent residents of Avalon were Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Wheeler. Mr. Wheeler was the first to buy property for the purpose of engaging in business. He built the "Avalon Home" (hotel), afterward called by the Banning Co. "The Island Villa Hotel." Mr. Wheeler conducted the first bakery on the island. Mrs. Wheeler reported many plants new to science and others before unknown on the island.

The Banning brothers built an aquarium on the water front of Avalon and opened it to the public in July, 1899. The building is 30x60 feet and has 10 large tanks and 13 smaller ones.

In the summer of 1902 Santa Catalina Island was connected with the mainland at White's Point by wireless telegraph. The first message was sent to Avalon on August 2, 1902. This system,* on the island, was perfected under the management of General A. L. New.

Santa Catalina Island is widely known as a "watering place," and it is estimated that the little town of Avalon has numbered 6,000 persons at one time.

The need of another town on the island has become apparent to the Banning Co. The site chosen is at the Isthmus, the old Indian townsite. Here a large hotel is to be built and houses erected. Boulevards, wharves and a new steamship are among the expected improvements. And, in the evolution of events, the little isthmus site, lying between mountains on two sides and washed by the Pacific ocean on the others, will rise, as if by magic, over the deserted graves and forgotten middens of a race that has almost ceased to exist.

The writer wishes to acknowledge her obligation to the following:

The Rev. Father J. Adam, Barcelona, Spain.

The Very Rev. J. J. O'Keefe, Superior of the Franciscans, San Luis Rey.

Mr. S. J. Mathes, Avalon, Santa Catalina Island.

Mrs. S. A. Howland, Loma Vista, Cal.

Mrs. E. J. Whitney, Avalon, Santa Catalina Island.

Professor J. M. Guinn, Secretary Southern California Historical Society, Los Angeles, Cal.

Also to Miss Mary L. Jones, librarian of the Los Angeles Public library, and her able corps of assistants, for many favors.

*A newspaper, "The Wireless," was started at Avalon on March 25, 1903. This is stated to have been the first newspaper in the world to receive its press notices by wireless telegraph.